

# School Attendance Policy

St Paul's Community College

Waterford

## ***Mission Statement***

*St Paul's Community College is a multi-denominational, co-educational school providing an inclusive learning environment for all.*

*We recognise and respect each student as an individual, embracing a variety of learning and teaching styles and aspiring to encourage each student's unique skills and talents.*

*St. Paul's Community College encourages the involvement of parents through home school contacts and through the involvement in the development and growth of the Parents Council.*

## ***Attendance***

Regular attendance at school is essential for all students so that they may reach their potential. Our school aims to foster a culture of regular attendance at school for all students. In addition we seek to identify and support those students who are experiencing problems with attendance at school. The provisions of the Education Welfare Act 2002 inform and support this policy.

## ***Rationale***

The policy is considered necessary because of:

- i. The educational interests of the students.
- ii. A number of legislative requirements arising from the Education Welfare Act 2002.
- iii. The changing fabric of our society.
- iv. The role of Túsla in legally enforcing school attendance (formerly the Education Welfare Board).
- v. The requirements of the Department of Education and Skills.
- vi. A lack of definition in roles of school partners in promoting, tracking and monitoring school attendance in St. Paul's Community College.

## ***Aims and Objectives***

This school policy sets out to:

- i. Improve educational outcome for all
- ii. Encourage full attendance by a variety of means e.g Breakfast Club and Certificates of Attendance

- iii. Identify pupils at risk.
- iv. Raise awareness with all educational partners of the importance of school attendance.
- v. Foster an appreciation of learning.
- vi. Improve communication with parents.

### ***Application of Policy***

This policy applies to all students of St. Paul's Community College regardless of age.

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

#### **A. Whole School Staff**

- **Class Teacher:**
  - i. Responsible for student registration for all class periods on e-portal.
  - ii. May keep their own "hard copy" attendance records
  - iii. Bring any concerns re: student attendance to the appropriate tutor..
  
- **Class Tutor:**
  - i. Ensure that students are aware of the importance of good attendance
  - ii. Record partial and full day absences in their journal/class register (hard copy) and e-portal.
  - iii. Updating the Green Registers every month ready for inspection by the Education Welfare Officer.
  - iv. Bring student absenteeism to the attention of the relevant Year Head for follow up.
  - v. Check for and retain notes from parents on a student's return after being absent from school
  - vi. Retain notes from students
  
- **Year Head / Programme Co-ordinator:**
  - i. Monitor attendance in year group and make students aware of importance of regular attendance.
  - ii. Make contact with parents/guardians in an effort to improve attendance and ascertain reasons for non-attendance.
  - iii. When necessary make referrals to Attendance Team/Pastoral Care Team with concerns over non-attendance
  - iv. Follow up on referrals from tutors
  - v. Year Heads in consultation with the class Tutor will, on a weekly basis, make referrals to the Attendance Team for follow up and feedback
  
- **Attendance Team:**
  - i. The Attendance Team may comprise staff members from HSCL, JCSP, SCP, Year Heads, Care Team members and other interested education partners as well as the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- ii. The Attendance Team will meet on a regular basis to identify students with non-attendance issues and discuss how best to support them so that they may maximize their attendance at school
  - iii. The Attendance Team will liaise with Year Heads, Deputy Principal and Principal when it is felt that support can be given to students and their families around long-term non-attendance
- **Pastoral Care Team:**
  - i. Take referrals from Year Heads and advise Principal on further courses of action which may be taken. These include intervention by P.C. team;
  - ii. Monitor students referred on an ongoing basis.
- **Deputy Principal:**
  - i. Liaise with Principal on all issue re. students including attendance
- **Principal:**
  - i. Overall responsibility for students including attendance.

#### **B. Parents/Guardians:**

- i. As the primary educators parents/guardians have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for their absence. Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 parents/guardians are responsible for making sure their child receives an education. The law also says that every child between the ages of 6 and 16 must attend school or otherwise receive an education. Most children attend recognised schools although some are educated at home or in non-recognised schools.
- ii. Parents/guardians must make themselves thoroughly familiar with the procedures outlined on page 4 of this document – **“Responsibility of Parents”**
- iii. Parents/guardians must ensure that the school have **the most up-to-date contact details for their child, including postal address and contact phone number.**

#### **C. Students:**

- i. Every student has a personal responsibility to attend school each day.
- ii. Every student has a responsibility to be punctual for school every day and to be on time for each class
- iii. Every student has a personal responsibility to participate fully in every class, obey school rules at all times and follow the directions of their teacher at all times.
- iv. Every student has a personal responsibility to show a note in their school journal after being absent from school to the class tutor

## ***Procedures:***

### **School Day**

- Students are expected to be present each day.
- It is the responsibility of Parent(s) / Guardian to ensure their child attends every day.
- Students are expected to maintain high standards of punctuality throughout the day.
- During the school day every student must attend every class according to their timetable.
- Every student is expected to be in attendance in good time so that they are seated in class by 9.00 a.m. and 1.15pm in accordance with their timetable.

- Class times are:

**Monday / Tuesday    9.00am - 12.35pm    1.15pm - 3.55pm**  
**Weds. / Thurs. / Fri.    9.00am - 12.35pm    1.15pm – 3.15pm**

- Students may not be absent from school except when the absence is unavoidable due to illness, urgent family reason or other legitimate and unavoidable reason.
- It is the responsibility of the Parent(s) / Guardian to furnish the school with a note in the Student Journal outlining the date and reason for every recorded absence. Parent(s) / Guardian should note that this is a requirement under the Educational Welfare Act (2002). Parent(s) / Guardian are requested to ensure all discretionary absences occur outside term time. The School Calendar is available to Parent(s) / Guardian through the school office and is published on the school website at [www.stpaulswaterford.ie](http://www.stpaulswaterford.ie)
- Students arriving late for school after 9.00 a.m. and /or after 1.15 p.m. must sign the late book at the School Reception before proceeding to class. Such students are expected to produce a note from their Parent(s) / Guardian explaining the reason they were late or have a note written into their School Journal. Late arrival to school on a repeated basis will be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions will apply.
- In the event of a student becoming ill or getting injured during the day they should inform their class teacher who may send them to the class Tutor/Year Head to obtain permission to go home. If such permission is granted contact with their Parent(s) / Guardian should be through the school office. When a student returns to school after such an absence a note of explanation should be presented in their school journal.
- On occasion students may be absent from class due to school related extra-curricular activities. Where a teacher is organising an approved activity which necessitates the absence of students from class a list of such students is posted in the staffroom or emailed to staff members and a copy given to the school secretary.
- A student wishing to leave the school premises for a legitimate reason during the school day must have a signed note from their Parent(s) / Guardian or a note in the Student Journal. This note should include the reason for the absence, the time the student is leaving and a contact number for verification. The student must get this note signed by the class Tutor/Year Head and then sign out at the school office. No student will be permitted to sign out without permission. Any student who leaves the school premises without such authorisation will be deemed to have breached the school code of discipline and appropriate sanctions will be applied.

- On rare occasions a student may be absent from school due to suspension for breach of discipline. In such instances parents will be consulted in advance and students are expected to use their time productively by applying themselves to their studies. In such instances, where a student is suspended, they should not be on the school premises or engaged in any school activity as there may be insurance implications.

***Communication:***

- In the event of a student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises the school must be notified immediately by Parent(s) / Guardian.
- The school may be made aware of any absences by phoning the school office on 051-355816, e-mailing the School Reception at info@stpaulswaterford.ie or through our school website at www.stpaulswaterford.ie or the St. Paul's "School App"
- Teachers are requested to record on e-portal all students in attendance and absent for each class period on a daily basis.
- Parent(s) / Guardian may be notified via phone call or text messaging if the school has a concern about a particular absence at any time and on any given date.
- The Parent(s) / Guardian may be requested to make an appointment to call to the school to address the school's concerns around unexplained absences and/or poor punctuality.
- It is very important that Parent(s) / Guardian provide up-to-date contact details as laid out in procedures on page 3, *paragraph (b)*, of this document.

***Sanctions for Breaches of School Attendance Policy:***

- Students with three late attendances will be expected to attend evening detention.
- At Junior school level students will lose a Demerit for being late to class.
- Unauthorized absence during the school day may result in evening detention or suspension or the student may be required to attend school on certain date(s) when the other student cohort are not required to be in attendance.
- Absences will be notified to Túsla (formerly the Education Welfare Board, as per the Education Welfare Act 2002)

***Policy Review:***

This policy will be reviewed every three years. It was ratified by the B.O.M. on

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Review Date : May 2018